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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/705,911	11/06/2000	John Hermon-Taylor	117-323	7604

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EXAMINER

ZEMAN, ROBERT A

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1645

DATE MAILED: 05/01/2003

12

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application N .

09/705,911

Applicant(s)

HERMON-TAYLOR ET AL.

Examiner

Robert A. Zeman

Art Unit

1645

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 February 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 24-27 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 26 and 27 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 24 and 25 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. 09/091,538.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☒ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 3 and 3a. 6) ☐ Other: _____

Art Unit: 1645

DETAILED ACTION

The amendment and response filed on 2-13-2003 is acknowledged. Claims 1-23 and 28-47 have been canceled. Claims 24-27 have been amended.

Election/Restrictions

Applicant's election with traverse of Group I in Paper No. 11 is acknowledged. The traversal is on the ground(s) that all claims have the same goals and lead to the same result and merely constitute alternative methods of providing the same polypeptide in order to raise an immune response to it. This is not found persuasive because searches of the varying groups would not be coextensive in scope.

The requirement is still deemed proper and is therefore made FINAL.

Claims 24-27 are pending. Claims 26 and 27 have been removed from consideration as being drawn to non-elected inventions. Claims 24 and 25 are currently under examination.

Information Disclosure Statement

The information disclosure statements filed on 11-6-2000 and 5-9-2001 are acknowledged. Initialed copies are attached hereto. It should be noted that the PTO-1449 form filed 7-12-2001 is missing. It is requested that Applicant furnish a copy of said form so the cited references can be considered.

Claim Objections

Claim 26 is objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c), as being of improper dependent form for failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim. Applicant is required to cancel the

Art Unit: 1645

claim(s), or amend the claim(s) to place the claim(s) in proper dependent form, or rewrite the claim(s) in independent form. Both claims recite the same method steps utilizing the same reagents.

35 U.S.C. First Paragraph, Enablement Rejection

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

Claims 24-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, because the specification, while being enabling for polypeptides having a sequence comprising SEQ ID NO:24, does not reasonably provide enablement for the myriads of other polypeptides species claimed. The specification is enabling only for claims limited to polypeptides represented by SEQ ID NO:24 because the specification does not reasonably provide enablement for polypeptide variants having at least 70% sequence identity to SEQ ID NO:24. The specification does not enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains or with which it is most nearly connected, to make/use the invention commensurate in scope with these claims.

Claim 15 is drawn to polypeptides with at least 70% identity to the amino acid sequence recited in SEQ ID NO:24. Said polypeptides have no claimed biochemical, immunological or physiological function.

Protein chemistry is probably one of the most unpredictable areas of biotechnology. Consequently, the effects of sequence dissimilarities upon protein structure and function cannot be predicted. Bowie et al (Science, 1990, 257:1306-1310) teach that an amino acid sequence encodes a message that determines the shape and function of a protein and that it is the ability of these proteins to fold into unique three-dimensional structures that

allows them to function and carry out the instructions of the genome and further teaches that the problem of predicting protein structure from sequence data and in turn utilizing predicted structural determinations to ascertain functional aspects of the protein is extremely complex. (column 1, page 1306). Bowie et al further teach that while it is known that many amino acid substitutions are possible in any given protein, the position within the protein's sequence where such amino acid substitutions can be made with a reasonable expectation of maintaining function are limited. Certain positions in the sequence are critical to the three dimensional structure/function relationship and these regions can tolerate only conservative substitutions or no substitutions (column 2, page 1306). The sensitivity of proteins to alterations of even a single amino acid in a sequence are exemplified by Burgess et al (J. of Cell Bio. 111:2129-2138, 1990) who teach that replacement of a single lysine residue at position 118 of acidic fibroblast growth factor by glutamic acid led to the substantial loss of heparin binding, receptor binding and biological activity of the protein and by Lazar et al. (Molecular and Cellular Biology, 1988, 8:1247-1252) who teach that in transforming growth factor alpha, replacement of aspartic acid at position 47 with alanine or asparagine did not affect biological activity while replacement with serine or glutamic acid sharply reduced the biological activity of the mitogen. These references demonstrate that even a single amino acid substitution will often dramatically affect the biological activity and characteristics of a protein. Clearly, proteins with up to 30% dissimilarity to the polypeptides of SEQ ID NO:24 that maintained the characteristics of the polypeptides encoded by SEQ ID NO:24 could not be predicted. Additionally, Bork (Genome Research, 2000,10:398-400) clearly teaches the pitfalls associated with comparative sequence analysis for predicting protein function because of the known error margins for high-throughput computational methods. Bork specifically teaches that computational sequence analysis is far from perfect, despite the fact that sequencing itself is highly automated and accurate (p. 398, column 1). One of the reasons for the inaccuracy is that the quality of data in public sequence databases is still insufficient. This is

particularly true for data on protein function. Protein function is context dependent, and both molecular and cellular aspects have to be considered (p. 398, column 2). Conclusions from the comparison analysis are often stretched with regard to protein products (p. 398, column 3). Further, although gene annotation via sequence database searches is already a routine job, even here the error rate is considerable (p. 399, column 2). Most features predicted with an accuracy of greater than 70% are of structural nature and, at best, only indirectly imply a certain functionality (see legend for table 1, page 399). As more sequences are added and as errors accumulate and propagate it becomes more difficult to infer correct function from the many possibilities revealed by database search (p. 399, paragraph bridging columns 2 and 3). The reference finally cautions that although the current methods seem to capture important features and explain general trends, 30% of those features are missing or predicted wrongly. This has to be kept in mind when processing the results further (p. 400, paragraph bridging cols 1 and 2). Clearly, given not only the teachings of Bowie et al., Lazar et al. and Burgess et al. but also the limitations and pitfalls of using computational sequence analysis and the unknown effects of alternative splicing, post translational modification and cellular context on protein function as taught by Bork, the claimed proteins could not be predicted based on sequence identity to SEQ ID NO:24. Further, even if a given polypeptide possesses all the structural limitations of the claimed invention, neither the specification nor any art of record teaches what that polypeptide is, what it does, does not teach a relationship to any specific disease or establish any involvement of the polypeptide in the etiology of any specific disease or teach which fragments might be active or which derivatives would function as claimed in a pharmaceutical composition. Clearly, it could not be predicted that polynucleotide, or a variant, that encodes a protein that shares only partial homology with a disclosed protein or that a protein that is encoded by a "variant" of a given SEQ ID NO will function in a given manner. Reasonable correlation must exist between the scope of the claims and scope of enablement set forth, and it cannot be predicted from the disclosure how to make/use polynucleotides of SEQ ID

NO:24. In view of the above, one of skill in the art would be forced into undue experimentation to practice the claimed invention.

35 U.S.C. 112, Written Description Rejection

Applicant is directed to the Guidelines for the Examination of Patent Applications Under the 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph "Written Description" Requirement, Federal Register, Vol. 66, No. 4, pages 1099-1111, Friday January 5, 2001.

Claim 24-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.

The specification discloses SEQ ID NO:24 and hence SEQ ID NO:24 meets the written description provision of 35 USC 112, first paragraph. However, the aforementioned claims are directed to encompass, sequences that have at least 70% identity to SEQ ID NO:24, corresponding sequences from other species, mutated sequences, allelic variants, splice variants, sequences that have a recited degree of identity (similarity, homology), and so forth. None of these sequences meet the written description provision of 35 USC 112, first paragraph. The specification provides insufficient written description to support the genus encompassed by the claim.

Vas-Cath Inc. v. Mahurkar, 19 USPQ2d 1111, makes clear that "applicant must convey with reasonable clarity to those skilled in the art that, as of the filing date sought, he or she was in possession of *the invention*. The invention is, for purposes of the 'written description' inquiry, *whatever is now claimed*." (See page 1117.) The specification does not "clearly allow persons of ordinary skill in the art to recognize that [he or she] invented what is claimed." (See Vas-Cath at page 1116.)

With the exception of SEQ ID NO:24, the skilled artisan cannot envision the detailed chemical structure of the encompassed polynucleotides and/or proteins, regardless of the complexity or simplicity

Art Unit: 1645

of the method of isolation. Adequate written description requires more than a mere statement that it is part of the invention and reference to a potential method for isolating it. The nucleic acid itself is required. See Fiers v. Revel, 25 USPQ2d 1601, 1606 (CAFC 1993) and Amgen Inc. V. Chugai Pharmaceutical Co. Ltd., 18 USPQ2d 1016. In Fiddes v. Baird, 30 USPQ2d 1481, 1483, claims directed to mammalian FGF's were found unpatentable due to lack of written description for the broad class. The specification provided only the bovine sequence.

Finally, University of California v. Eli Lilly and Co., 43 USPQ2d 1398, 1404. 1405 held that: ...To fulfill the written description requirement, a patent specification must describe an invention and does so in sufficient detail that one skilled in the art can clearly conclude that "the inventor invented the claimed invention." *Lockwood v. American Airlines Inc.*, 107 F.3d 1565, 1572, 41 USPQ2d 1961, 1966 (1997); *In re Gosteli*, 872 F.2d 1008, 1012, 10 USPQ2d 1614, 1618 (Fed. Cir. 1989) (" [T]he description must clearly allow persons of ordinary skill in the art to recognize that [the inventor] invented what is claimed."). Thus, an applicant complies with the written description requirement "by describing the invention, with all its claimed limitations, not that which makes it obvious," and by using "such descriptive means as words, structures, figures, diagrams, formulas, etc., that set forth the claimed invention." *Lockwood*, 107 F.3d at 1572, 41 USPQ2d at 1966.

An adequate written description of a DNA, such as the cDNA of the recombinant plasmids and microorganisms of the '525 patent, "requires a precise definition, such as by structure, formula, chemical name, or physical properties," not a mere wish or plan for obtaining the claimed chemical invention. *Fiers v. Revel*, 984 F.2d 1164, 1171, 25 USPQ2d 1601, 1606 (Fed. Cir. 1993). Accordingly, "an adequate written description of a DNA requires more than a mere statement that it is part of the invention and reference to a potential method for isolating it; what is required is a description of the DNA itself." *Id.* at 1170, 25 USPQ2d at 1606.

The name cDNA is not itself a written description of that DNA; it conveys no distinguishing information concerning its identity. While the example provides a process for obtaining human insulin-encoding cDNA, there is no further information in the patent pertaining to that cDNA's relevant structural or physical characteristics; in other words, it thus does not describe human insulin cDNA. Describing a method of preparing a cDNA or even describing the protein that the cDNA encodes, as the example does, does not necessarily describe the cDNA itself. No sequence information indicating which nucleotides constitute human cDNA appears in the patent, as appears for rat cDNA in Example 5 of the patent. Accordingly, the specification does not provide a written description of the invention of claim 5.

Therefore, only SEQ ID NO:24, but not the full breadth of the claims meets the written description provision of 35 USC 112, first paragraph. The species specifically disclosed are not representative of the genus because the genus is highly variant. Applicant is reminded that Vas-Cath makes clear that the written description provision of 35 USC 112 is severable from its enablement provision. (See page 1115.)

Additionally, It is noted that applicant(s) have listed a sequence which is known in the art and which has a high percentage sequence similarity to a claimed sequence. Absent factual evidence, a percentage sequence similarity of less than 100 % is not deemed to reasonably support to one skilled in the art whether the biochemical activity of the claimed subject matter would be the same as that of such a similar known biomolecule. It is known for nucleic acids as well as proteins, for example, that even a single nucleotide or amino acid change or mutation can destroy the function of the biomolecule in many instances, albeit not in all cases. The effects of these changes are largely unpredictable as to which ones have a significant effect versus not. Therefore, the citation of sequence similarity results in an unpredictable and therefore unreliable correspondence between the claimed biomolecule and the indicated similar biomolecule of known function and therefore lacks support regarding utility and/or enablement.

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 24 and 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Art Unit: 1645

Claim 24 is rendered vague and indefinite by the use of the term “administering an effective amount of”. To what is the claimed substance administered?

Claim 24 is rendered vague and indefinite by the use of the term “epitope”. It is unclear what applicant is referring. Is applicant referring to a binding epitope for a given ligand? If so, what ligand? Is applicant referring to an immuno-epitope? As written, it is impossible to determine the metes and bounds of the claimed invention.

Claim 24 is rendered vague and indefinite by the use of the phrase “which method comprises”. It is unclear what is meant by said term.

Conclusion

No claim is allowed.

Claims 24 and 25 are free of the art of record to the degree they read on polypeptides comprising SEQ ID NO:24.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Robert A. Zeman whose telephone number is (703) 308-7991. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday- Thursday, 7am -5:30 p.m..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner’s supervisor, Lynette Smith can be reached on (703) 308-3909. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 308-4242 for regular communications and (703) 308-4242 for After Final communications.

Art Unit: 1645

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0196.


**LYNETTE R. F. SMITH
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TECHNOLOGY CENTER 1600**

Robert A. Zeman
April 28, 2003